

HB854 Statewide Housing Study

Program Fact Sheet

Virginia Rent Relief Program (RRP)

Department of Housing and Community Development

Note: This fact sheet was created in October 2021. Program details can change regularly. For the most up-to-date information on this program and a program contact, please visit the link below:

[Link to program website](#)

01 Program goals

The goal of RRP is to provide rent relief to tenants and landlords financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

02 Funding sources

In 2020, RRP was funded with a combination of federal Coronavirus Relief Funds and State Housing Trust Fund dollars. In February 2021, the program began operating exclusively with federal Emergency Rental Assistance resources from the U.S. Treasury.

Source	Amount
Covid Relief Funding (CRF) - Federal Treasury	\$62,000,000
Virginia Housing Trust fund - State	\$24,000,000
Emergency Rental Assistance - Round 1 - Federal Treasury	\$525,000,000
Emergency Rental Assistance - Round 2 - Federal - Treasury	\$450,000,000

03 Governance

DHCD is the grantee. DHCD partners with Virginia Housing to provide access to the program for landlords and a contractor to provide access to the program for tenants.

04 Population served

There are three eligibility criteria for RRP:

- 1) household income must be less than or equal to 80% of the Area Median Income;
- 2) the rent on the unit must be less than or equal to 150% of the Fair Market Rent;
- 3) and the tenant must have been either directly or indirectly impacted by COVID-19 through either a loss of income or an increase in expenses.

05 How program works

If an application is completed by the tenant, they complete it online and submit supporting documents such as income documentation, their lease agreement and sign the RRP Landlord-Tenant Household Agreement. The landlord must countersign the RRP Landlord-Tenant Household Agreement and also submit a copy of the ledger for the tenant's unit and a Virginia W-9. There is a Support Center that tenants can call into with questions. Support Center staff also call tenants who have not made progress on their application. DHCD is also partnering with nonprofits to help underserved populations successfully submit their applications. Applications submitted this way are paid via hard check from the Virginia Department of Accounts.

If an application is completed by the landlord, the landlord gives their tenant a paper copy of the RRP application to complete. When the tenant has completed the application, they give it to their landlord and the landlord also collects all necessary documentation from their tenants. The landlord then manually enters that information into the Grant Management System of Virginia Housing for review, approval, and processing. Applications submitted this way are paid via ACH/direct deposit.

06 Program history

The program began in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Governor Northam and the General Assembly made significant investments during the pandemic to implement and continue the statewide Rent and Mortgage Relief Program (RMRP), now known as the Rent Relief Program (RRP) through the Department of Housing and Community Development. With an initial \$50 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding, Virginia was able to launch RMRP on June 29, 2020 to help households facing eviction and foreclosure due to COVID-19. Virginia was one of the first states in the nation to utilize CARES Act funding to implement a statewide rental and mortgage assistance program. The application process was originally designed for use by tenants and homeowners. However, beginning in September 2020, the Governor worked with DHCD and Virginia Housing to launch a landlord-initiated application process as well, which expanded capacity to deliver this needed relief statewide.

Prior to receiving Emergency Rental Assistance as part of the federal emergency response package, additional investments in the Virginia Housing Trust Fund ensured the continuance of the program as a bridge between the end of December 2020 until additional federal funds were allocated. Coinciding with the use of Emergency Rental Assistance, in February 2021, the program evolved to no longer offer mortgage assistance and was subsequently renamed the Virginia Rent Relief Program (RRP).

07 Program highlight

- As of September 8, 2021, RRP has served 60,393 unique households - 59,829 of those households have received rental assistance, while 564 received mortgage assistance at the early inception of the program.
- The majority of households served from June 2020 to May 2021 have been Black and non-Hispanic households.
- The average assistance level between June 2020 and May 2021 was \$4,701 per household.